



# Edmonton

September 1996

## NEXT MEETING:

### New Address:

Tuesday, September 17, '96

7:30 pm

**Suite 103**

**10612- 124 St**

We welcome everyone, newcomers and "oldtimers" alike, to start a wonderful new season with us in the Gay and Lesbian Community Center's very attractive new accommodations.

The coffee will be on when you arrive!

For further information please phone Lynne at [REDACTED] or Ellen at [REDACTED]

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### FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, Oct 1, 1996

7:00 pm

Ste. 3, 10612 - 124 St.

All members from the 1995/1996 year are not only welcome, but **encouraged** to attend, as we will be electing our new board members for the coming year. Coffee will be



served and anyone wishing to bring "nibbles" please do so. See you there! (P.S. There will also be regular business to discuss and make decisions on.)

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### FAREWELL "RELUCTANT CHAIR"

After four years of cheerful, dedicated service, our "reluctant chair", Cindy Ryley, solved her problem by moving to Penticton to set up *Morningside Bed and Breakfast* with her fun-loving husband, Dick.

Although they coyly suspect they've escaped us, we plan to visit them on successive weekends to taste more of Dick's famous cooking!

Just in case anyone, anywhere, missed receiving the address of their new les/bi/gay/transgender positive bed and breakfast, it is:

***Morningside***

***Bed & Breakfast***

**YOUR HOME AWAY FROM  
HOME**

**with hosts Dick & Cindy  
Ryley**

**1645 Carmi Ave**

**Penticton, B.C. V2A 7G3**

**Ph. 1-604-492-5874**

PFLAG Edmonton owes Cindy, and Dick (the man behind the woman), a great debt for the many hours they have spent to make Alberta, and Edmonton in particular, a more gay/transgender positive place for both parents and their children to live. Under Cindy's guidance PFLAG Edmonton grew from a group of five

parents to a group of 28 ("paid-up") members, a 560% increase!

We wish Cindy and Dick all the very best in their semi-retirement in Penticton and very much look forward to seeing them again when they come to visit at our next meeting, September 17, '96.

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**PFGAL SUPPORT -  
MEANS HOMOPHOBIA  
PREVENTION IN PFLAG  
HOMES!**

(Courtesy *The Globe and Mail*, May 21, 1992, Fifth Column, Family: Bigots in the family closet? Don't just shut the door, advises Vivian Smith)

I have a close friend whose elderly relatives are generous, hard-working and irreplaceable keepers of the family history. In public they are polite to everyone. In private, they occasionally say things so racist or sexist that he is left gasping. Should I keep my children away from them, he asks? Do we throw people away when we find out they have a rotten side?

They are, after all, repeating what their parents taught them to say years ago, which was then reinforced by other family members. The outside world weighed in obligingly with "proof" that their theories were right: to them, for instance, the reason few women were in public office was because women weren't fit to lead.

**When these people were growing up in their poor households, there had to be a "them," so that there could be an "us."** A little secret the whole clan could share.

**Such covert prejudice continues in many homes today,** passed on from one generation to the next.

**The target groups may change** (from race to religion to sexual orientation),\* but the message never does: **In this family, we are superior to others, and we prejudge others privately according to their wealth or hue or speech or size (or sexual orientation\*)** And if we live in the right neighbourhood, we can wink and smile at other families who think the way we do.

Life is likely becoming more uncomfortable for these folks, however. As society demands greater equality for (all of)\* its members, the closet bigots must really be feeling the urge to dig in. The older ones may sense their increasing isolation and say it is too late for them to change.

Psychologist Ester Cole says she is hopeful that in-house acts of prejudice will decline in younger families. "Many parents are saying, 'I need to look at my own behaviour,'" says Dr. Cole, who works with the Toronto Board of Education...

Here's a classic example of what she is talking about: "When a racist/'queer'\*/religious\* joke or comment is tolerated at the dinner table, the kids get a message that this is not just a joke, but a way of classifying people by race or gender or sexual orientation\* or religion\*. Parents think they are being polite by saying nothing, but a child gets the message that they agree with the comment being made. A lack of response is a response," says Dr. Cole.

There are no instant solutions, "agrees Dr. Cole, who believes parents are equally responsible with schools in dealing with bigotry. In general, she says, families can take small steps, day

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by day, to prepare their children for an egalitarian society.

Examples (author unknown):

Expose all family members to people who are victims of injustice, to people who are working for change, and to a wide variety of situations. This deepens our understanding of injustice, what needs to be done and how to make a difference. **It touches our hearts and moves us to want to act more compassionately and courageously.** Inviting people into our homes; looking for books, TV shows, videos and music that touch children especially; finding places in our own community as well as elsewhere (e.g., when we travel) that expose us to justice concerns are all possibilities.

- Seek out actions that are within all family members' especially children's, capabilities. Actions involving sharing our home are safer and more understandable for younger members. Building on previous experiences rather than multiplying new ones helps. Recognizing and respecting the children's needs means tailoring our time expectations to them and being flexible.
- Provide hospitality/ A good way...is through opening our hearts and homes to others in need.
- **Community is essential.** Working with other families helps us overcome our fears, increases the effectiveness of our actions, provides accountability and challenge, and makes it more fun too.

(e.g. Become an active member of PFLAG in your community!)

(\* indicates editors addition to the text)

## PFLAG EDUCATION

### **PFLAG SPEAKERS BUREAU**

At the invitation of *Planned Parenthood* members of PFLAG Edmonton have spoken to three groups of young adults over the spring and summer. The last groups were peer counsellors, many of them from university and encouragingly gay/transgender positive.

All three groups showed a high degree of interest in the concerns of people born with a "difference" in sexual orientation or gender identity. This was evident in the large number of questions, both verbal and written, which were presented to our PFLAG speakers for comments and clarification of issues.

Such speaking engagements are invaluable to increase the public's knowledge and understanding of our children, who are often seen as "different" but in truth form a part of the broad spectrum of diversity of which *all* human beings are a part.

A big thank you goes out to our speakers - Gisela, Catherine, Joyce, Ellen, Bryson and Irving.

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### **EDUCATION OF PFLAGers**

Six of our PFLAG members "man" a helpline weeknights from 7:00 to 10:00 pm. These people, and other members of PFLAG, have long felt the need of a workshop on suicide prevention to enhance our understanding of, and skills in working with, the concerns that arise for les/bi/gay/transgender persons. On August 27/96 we finally got our wish in the form of a Support Network workshop (free) conducted by the very organized,

informative and entertaining Tom Smith. In this three hour workshop Tom summarized a process to more effectively channel suicidal persons to the resources, both internal and external, that they need to deal with the "dark, velvet blanket depression" in which they find themselves almost helplessly engulfed.

Ten PFLAG members attended - five mothers, one sister, one son and three fathers. The enthusiastic response to the helpfulness of this workshop to our work has engendered a request for Tom to speak at a future meeting, perhaps on the more general topic of developing/organizing our communication skills. This would not only benefit us as individuals answering the helpline, but as speakers in public forums and in providing support to other parents and their children at our support meetings. **If you have additional ideas or suggestions, please phone Lynne at [REDACTED]**

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**NOTE:** The Support Network's suicide prevention program for adolescents has been renamed **"THE OTHER SIDE"**.

Their goal is for program participants to identify and express their feelings, understand their personal circumstances, develop coping skills or strategies, improve communication with others, learn to view situations optimistically, and, subsequently, make healthier choices for themselves.

This service is available for adolescents 12 - 17 years old who:

- have a history of depression, suicidal ideation, or suicidal behavior
- are voluntarily willing to participate

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- have parent or guardian consent if they are not legally responsible for themselves
- are not currently dealing with a substance **addiction** issue.

There is no fee required to participate in this program. Topics covered include stress management, assertiveness, feelings, self talk, relationships, grief, loss and depression, expectations, action planning and resources.

For further information please contact a Youth Services Worker at **482-0198**.

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### **NEW SUICIDE STUDY ALARMS CALGARY SCHOOL BOARD**

(Courtesy *Perceptions*, July 24, 1996, *Dealing with Suicide*)

(Calgary) School trustees in Calgary have voted in support of a plan to create an information package to assist teachers who are working with lesbian and gay students. The decision to implement the plan came after the release of a study by University of Calgary social worker Chris Bagley who reported that young gay men are almost 14 times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual counterparts.

For his study Bagley randomly surveyed 750 men between the ages of 18 and 27. From the survey he concluded that gay men are 14 times more likely to attempt suicide compared to heterosexual men. He also discovered that half of all males who make serious suicide attempts are gay or bisexual and that gay men re-attempt suicide up to 50 per cent more than heterosexual men.

**Bagley concluded that health professionals and school**

## counsellors aren't adequately trained to deal with the issue.

Pat Boyle, gender issues adviser for the school board, said a recent random survey in Calgary suggests that the number of gay and lesbian students in the Calgary school system could be as high as 12.9% of the student population.

Boyle said she is aware of gay beatings in Calgary high schools. "It starts in junior high," she says. "If a young man doesn't fit the stereotype of a sports-minded male, then that student may be put down and called a 'fag' or 'gay'." She added that young lesbians face similar pressures that frequently end up in academic problems, depression, drug and alcohol abuse and suicide. She also suggested that the gay and lesbian drop-out rate in high schools is well above average.

Peter Hodgson of the gay youth support group, I-Dentity, told the trustees, "They're in Grade 1, they're in Grade 6, they're in Grade 9, and they're in Grade 12. We're asking as gay, lesbian and bisexual youth, (that) you keep us safe."

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## PFLAG RESOURCE MANUAL

PFLAG Edmonton now has a *fantastic* fifty-two page resource manual designed by Dale as a tool both for Gay and Lesbian Community Center support workers and for our helpline parents although information will also be available to all our members at monthly meetings.

This resource information, a small part of which is of a confidential nature, includes the following subject areas: medical, suicide, support, religion, legal, business,

recreation, social, HIV/AIDS and miscellaneous.

For further information please phone our helpline at [REDACTED] VB 3524 to reach a PFLAG member or phone GLCC at 488-3234.

A huge THANKYOU goes out to Dale for the countless hours he volunteered searching out, organizing and colating this invaluable resource information.

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## EVENTS CALENDAR



Metropolitan Community Church  
presents

### GOSPEL MUSIC CONCERT

by Marsha Stevens  
(born again lesbian)

Saturday, September 14, 1996

8:00 pm

McDougall United Church

10025 - 101 St

Main Sanctuary

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Marsha Stevens began her musical career at the age of 16 when she wrote the modern hymn *For Those Tears I Died* or *Come to the Water* which has been included in most church hymnals since 1972. She sang and toured for 9 years with the Christian folk group known as "The Children of the Day". The group made six albums for which Marsha wrote most of

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the songs...During this time she also sang and did back-up vocals on several of the *Marantha* and *Praise* albums and toured in the U.S., Canada, Europe and Israel.

Marsha came out as a born again lesbian in 1979 and spent most of the first 5 years sorting out and establishing her new life. Then, in 1984, Marsha began singing and writing again, this time a ministry to the gay and lesbian Christian community. She studied nursing at the University of the State of New York and became an RN to support herself and her two children while she began traveling full-time singing and sharing about God's love for *all* people.

Faithful supporters have made 5 solo albums and a concert video possible. All of these are released on the B.A.L.M. (Born Again Lesbian Music) label, a publishing company that Marsha started and operates with her lover, Suzanne.

For further info and other MCC spiritual events please phone M.C.C. at 429-2321.

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## AIDS WALK

September 29, 1996

Kinsmen Park

Join the PFLAG team, fill out your pledge card, and stroll with us through Edmonton's scenic autumn river valley to raise funds for HIV/AIDS prevention, education, care and support programs for individuals who are infected or affected by AIDS and HIV. It is more than a fund raiser - it's a gathering of people from all walks of life expressing a shared concern.

To join the PFLAG team phone Ellen at [REDACTED] or for further info phone [REDACTED]

## EDMONTON VOCAL MINORITY

Saturday September 28, 1996

8:00 pm

Garneau Theatre

8712 - 109 St

Pirouetting in directly from their home in Santa Fe, New Mexico, this world-traveled duo of song and satire will be the show-stopping headliners for our exciting fifth season.

**Romanovsky & Phillips** deliver songs with deliberate tongue-in-cheek gravity and always with dramatic flair. These gay troubadours are joining with the **Garneau Theatre** to present this concert as a benefit for the **Canadian GALA Choruses Festival** which will be hosted by **Edmonton Vocal Minority** in **May 1998.**

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### GMOC Workshops

St Stephens College

U of A campus

Autumn 1996

#### Series I:

Being Gay in the 90s

Wed, Oct 24 thru Wed, Dec. 4

7 to 10 pm

Facilitators: Brian & Brian

#### Series II

Coming Out in the 90s

Thurs Oct 24 thru Thurs Nov 28

7 to 10 pm

Facilitators: Jim and Fred

For further info: [REDACTED]

To register: [REDACTED]

## WEEKLY EVENTS

### GAY MEN'S WEDNESDAY COFFEE EVENINGS

Last year after completing a GMOC Wednesday evening workshop we kept on meeting over coffee and cake. It was a good chance to relax, joke, be serious, and seek companions for other outings.

These coffee evenings have spawned group outings to fund raising events, the Princess Theatre, parties, a concert and a potluck. We've even had two members of our original group fall in love and start a gay family!

It all begins at the Wednesday Coffee Evening and you don't have to have attended a GMOC Workshop to join us! To make contact phone Graham at 463-2098

or

just ask for us in the nonsmoking side (right - step down)

of

**Breadstick Cafe**  
**10159 - 82 Ave**

from 7:30 on...

See you there!

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### RIVER VALLEY CYCLISTS

Our river valley excursions happen twice per week. We meet Thursday evenings at 7:00 pm, Sunday

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afternoons at 2:00 pm, at the view point where 103rd street connects with Saskatchewan Drive. Fifteen to twenty minutes later we are on our way, sometimes east, sometimes west, so if you arrive too late the chances are you won't meet up with us.

The river valley has an atmosphere of its own that we enjoy as much as the ride. We are an interactive group. This is a social ride after all, not a race. We often visit with each other as we cycle along when the road space allows. The pace is steady with frequent stops. While the fit and energetic sometimes go the extra mile, others will rest and await their return.

We do try to finish back where we started - Thursday evenings allowing enough time to get home before dark, and on Sundays allowing time to be back for supper (5:00 to 6:00 pm). Some may go for coffee or a meal after the ride; others rush home for supper, or to prepare for the next day at work.

The River Valley Cyclists welcome everyone - gays, lesbians, transgenders and their friends and parents. Come join us!

Phone: Peter [REDACTED] or Mike [REDACTED]

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### PINK TRIANGLE YOUTH of EDMONTON

#### (PTYE)

The Pink Triangle Youth Group of Edmonton is a not-for-profit society that operates to provide the following services to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender communities in the Edmonton area:

- positive social interaction for **all** gay, lesbian, bisexual,

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transgender and transvestite youth, ages 16 to 21;

- positive interaction between these "queer" youth and their community(ies);
- information sessions to inform youths, their friends and families of various activities and events in and around their area to encourage participation;
- peer counselling opportunities such as those that may be missed in a regular social services environment;
- referrals to gay or gay positive professionals (doctors, lawyers, social workers, psychologists, etc.)
- a sense of "Queer History" and what part they can play in the future;
- leadership instruction and practical situations in which to use the skills.

These objectives are *very* important to the basic structure of PTYE and the youth group would not function if these were removed. The standard of a support group does not apply to this structure. The youths are given the opportunity to help themselves and then to assist others in the same quest. Loosely based, the following restrictions apply:

- Age: between 16 to 21 yrs;
- Sex: either male, female or transgender;
- Sexual Orientation: The group is designed for gay, lesbian bisexual, transgender and transvestite youths and their friends, so any youth is welcome.

### MONTHLY PTYE SCHEDULE:

**Saturdays, 8 to 10 pm**

# 103

10612 - 124 St

- 1st Saturday: Social evening
- 2nd Saturday: Information night\*\*
- 3rd Saturday: Activity Night\*
- 4th Saturday: Youths' choice\*
- 5th Saturday: Discussion group

\* Please call [REDACTED] voice box 10 for further information on specific dates.

\*\* Information nights are when guest speakers from various organizations in the Edmonton area come to share what they do and how they help youth.

**We help  
simply by helping you  
to like yourself**

We network with the many other youth-serving organizations in the Edmonton area. This serves to allow referrals to and from these groups without prejudice or discrimination.

Info: [REDACTED] 6 to 12 pm  
weekday evenings; all day  
Saturday and Sunday.

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### METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

Weekly Worship

Sundays @ 7:15 pm

10086 MacDonald Drive  
(McDougall United Church)

Riverside entrance

Phone: 4292321

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### LAMBDA CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Weekly worship

Sundays @ 7:00 pm

11148 - 84 Ave  
(Garneau United Church)

Welcomes the les/bi/gay  
community

Phone: 988-3913

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### LIATRIS SOCIETY OF EDMONTON

A casual group of queer-positive green thumbs who meet for horticultural experiences and social interaction. There are no membership fees in 1996, and our events are open to all. Call Brent at [REDACTED] or the O2 hotline at [REDACTED]

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### OUT & OUT (O2)

Outdoor and recreation group for gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. Jogging, roller blading, dog walking, cycling, beach volleyball, camping and other activities. Call [REDACTED]

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### OUTreach

A social and political organization on the University of Alberta campus. Meets 5:00 pm, Mondays at Athabasca Hall.

Phone: [REDACTED]

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**Lesbian Life  
Line:** [REDACTED]



# IT'S A GAY LIFE!

September 1996

## K.D. LANG IS HERO...

### ..for Alberta's nonconformists:

(Courtesy of The Edmonton Journal, Aug 14, 1996)

by David Staples

**T**here are two kinds of rural Albertans - a vast, highly conventional right-wing majority and a much smaller group of unconventional left-wingers.

Rural lefties have always suffered from a sense of isolation that can make them feel like oddballs. But there's always been one consolation. To be a small-town lefty in Alberta, you have to have guts. And one of the gutsiest of all, in my mind, is singer k.d. lang.

I never would have said that a few years ago, not until lang admitted what most of her fans already knew, that she was a lesbian. This past Sunday, lang gave her first Edmonton concert in seven years and the first concert here where she was completely out of the closet.

On stage, she was a sensual, gyrating, joking, Elvis-



mimicking hero of a gay woman.

To me, she was also a hero of Alberta.

Lang travels the world with this act, performing for tens of thousands of people. Her sexuality is now as much a part of the show as her country heritage. These days, she shows the world that there's more to Alberta than the Klein gang and staid, white-collar Calgary. She's a testament to the other side, to

the forgotten oddballs of this province. **She's also a role model to young, like-minded souls.** The intellectual, the gay, the goof and the outsider can follow her lead. In every dingy oilpatch town, in every hamlet sticking up from the prairie, kids can see her and know that the local orthodoxy isn't the only way.

Watching lang on Sunday night, I thought back to 1990, when her controversial "Meat Stinks" campaign led some in her southeastern Alberta hometown of Consort (population 1,000) to lash out. I had no problem at all with the angry letters to the editor and nothing against ranch families deciding not to buy her records any more. Lang had it coming. But a few hate-mongers made angry calls to lang's mother, Audrey, and also defaced Consort's two "Home of k.d. lang" signs, scrawling: Eat Beef Dyke.

A local woman, Marjorie Hannah, and a handful of kids decided to rally in support of

lang. Hannah's 10-year-old daughter, Bonnie, tried to scrub clean the signs. Another daughter, Mary, then 15, gave a speech supporting lang's right to free speech.

Bonnie is now 16, going into Grade 12, working the summer as a waitress at Mel's Diner in Consort. Mary, 21, works at the local hospital and plans to study medicine at the University of Alberta. Neither Mary nor Bonnie knows k.d. well, but lang's mother, Audrey, taught Bonnie in Grade 2 and Mary was on Audrey's bowling team last winter.

Both Mary and Bonnie are proud they stood up for k.d. in 1990.

"It was easier than I thought," Mary says of the pro-k.d. rally in 1990. "I was really, really nervous to do it. But afterwards I realized if you truly believe in something, there's no reason why you can't stand up and say, 'OK, this is what I think, and I really don't care what everyone else says.'"

**"I think there should be more people like k.d.,"** Mary continues, "I think people shouldn't be afraid to admit who they are. If they're different from everybody else, there's nothing wrong with it."

Shortly after the incident, Bonnie heard friends in

school boast that their parents had been in on the anti-lang activities. At first, Bonnie didn't say a thing. "I was young and I thought, 'Oh God, what if I say something, will I lose all my friends?'"

**These days, however, when a k.d. song comes on the radio and someone says they should switch the station because lang is gay, Bonnie challenges them. "I just stand up for what I believe in."**

**Lang herself feared she'd lose popularity if she came out of the closet. She especially worried that her mom would face more harassment. But when lang let go of her secret in 1992, things worked out. Her fame grew. Her honesty added to her show.**

As she said soon after, "The really, really big thing I experienced this year was the intimacy between me and the audience... It's that I feel comfortable knowing that they came here knowing. I don't have to worry that if they finally figured it out, they would get up and leave. **Being out is just great. I recommend it to people who are ready to do it. Just do it.**"

I have to admit I've never been a fan of lang's recorded music. It never grabbed my heart, and I always wondered

## IT'S A GAY LIFE!

if it was because the songs never really came from her own heart, whether her secret sexuality kept her from singing about what was deep inside and important. On Sunday, though, lang's spirit poured out in songs like *Crying* and *Constant Craving*. She was honest and bold and funny and bright enough not only to electrify Gallagher Park, but also to light up the gloomy dark around every small town and in every oddball heart from Carcassonne to Cardston.

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*You know times are changing when women begin dressing up as gay men who dress up as women. (Nick Elgar/London Features; ACROSS Brett Lee/Starfile)*